



Virtual Small Group Study
SESSION 1: THE ELUSIVE SECRET
Participant's Guide

Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, couples will have:

1. Recognized that for a marriage relationship to work, they need to establish a vertical relationship with God first.
2. Shared their experiences in trying to get their satisfaction from their spouse instead of allowing God to satisfy them.
3. Made a decision to offer Jesus the front seat of their lives and marriages.

I. Preliminaries

A. Welcome and Intro. -Introduce yourselves: Spouse's name; # of years married; # of children; work; 1 expectation from the study.

B. Ground rules for a SAFE, fruitful and meaningful discussion time: S.A.F.E.R

S-hare nothing that would embarrass your spouse (*Make sure you have an approval from him/her if it is a sensitive issue. Better yet, focus more on sharing your personal issues, concerns. Speak for yourself. What have you learned personally? What can you change? How are you contributing to your marriage- positively or negatively? Use "I statements", like, "I struggle with...", INSTEAD OF, "Many couples...or my spouse struggles with..."*)

A-nything shared in the group stays in the group. Respect privacy, maintain confidentiality.

F-ocus or listen attentively when someone is talking. This demonstrates respect and promotes understanding.

E-very one is encouraged to participate in the sharing but be brief and to the point.

R-espond to God and resolve to obey Him. Pray for and with your spouse. Make and apply your specific action plans/ steps: "I will _____". (Refer to "**I will**" Chart).

II. Interaction /Discussion Time:

A. Impression, Impact of the Video

B. Discuss the ff. questions:



1. Read this quote and discuss: *“The only way a horizontal relationship will work is, if you go vertical first.” - Dave and Ann Wilson*

- How have you experienced this in your relationship? How has your horizontal relationship (*husband & wife*) been affected by your vertical relationship with God?

2. One of the scriptures that Dave and Ann mentioned was Jeremiah 2:12-13, it says,

“Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the Lord. “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

The Wilsons connect the “broken cisterns” to our unhealthy expectations of happiness and fulfilment from our spouse/relationships.

- How have you seen this in your relationship? What are some ways that you create “broken cisterns” instead of choosing “a spring of living water”? Would you like to share your experience?
 - How does this scripture (*Jer.2:12-13*) connect with the statement “We think we married the wrong person but we are actually looking in the wrong place”?
3. Dave and Ann said, *“When we go vertical first, God quenches our thirst.”*
 - How could this perspective impact/affect your view of yourself, your relationship with others, your spouse, or your kids? *Describe some specific ways this perspective could have an effect on you and your relationships. Share your personal experience.*
 4. How do we go vertical? The couple talked about how to **Divert Daily** (*Pray Together*), **Withdraw Weekly** (*Date Night, Church, join small groups*), and **Abandon Annually** (*Getaway, attend couples seminars*).
 - Which one do you do best? Share 1 way you do this in your relationship or in your own life. How does that allow you to keep a “vertical-first” relationship?
 - Which one do you need to improve?

5. How did you connect with the Tandem Bike illustration?

- Currently or most of the time, who is sitting in the front seat of your life and marriage?
- What do you think keeps many husbands and wives (or you personally) from offering Jesus the front seat in life and marriage?
- How can you choose to go vertical first this week?

☑ > (LIFE-CHANGING DECISION: Prayer to receive Christ as Savior and Lord or Prayer how to be filled or to be controlled by the Holy Spirit)

The Wilsons said, *“The simple secret begins with realizing that a purely horizontal marriage just doesn’t work.” So, go vertical first and put Jesus at the center of your life and relationship. Put Jesus first in everything you do... (Prov. 3:6-TLB).*

“The scariest, safest, most wonderful place to be, is with Jesus in the front seat and in control.”- Ann W.

III. Specific Application:



As you reflect on today’s topic of going vertical first, what is your biggest takeaway or realization? Why?

What is your SMART (*specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bounded*) action plan/step? *What is your “I Will” statement as a starting point this week? Ex: “I will start praying intentionally for and with my spouse every day, starting tomorrow.”* (You can make a list of action plans/steps and continue doing them this week).

“I will _____”. **(Write it on your “I will “ Chart).**

IV. Moments Together: (Connect horizontally and vertically).



As a couple, you are highly encouraged to take time (make a date) to talk/ discuss the questions together this week and come up with additional specific action points for your application. This is also the best time for you to go VERTICAL by ending your time praying together as a couple.

Wrap- up: Go back to the Big Group (for announcements, closing prayer, etc.)

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